

**LDC Statement during the Preparatory Committee
meeting of the Fourth International Conference on
Small Island Developing States**

Distinguished Co-Chairs

Secretary-General of the Conference

Special Adviser for the Conference

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honored to make this statement on behalf of the group of Least Developed Countries.

At the outset, I thank the Co-chairs for convening this important meeting and appreciate the unremitting efforts you and your esteemed team have been exerting to make the Fourth Conference of Small Island Developing States a success.

As fellow members of a group of countries with special situations in their development path, LDCs are in strong solidarity with SIDs in their endeavors to find concrete yet implementable measures for their development aspirations.

Our shared interests and common aspirations are also manifested in the fact that a quarter of SIDS are LDCs.

Excellencies,

The countries in special situations including SIDS have been facing multiple vulnerabilities, challenges, and risks. They remain susceptible to external shocks.

The compounding crises from the pandemic, rising conflicts, and skyrocketing costs of living have deeply impacted their efforts to achieve SDGs by SIDs.

These multiple challenges and crises have further exacerbated the existing social, economic, and environmental challenges SIDs are facing.

Above all, no country is facing a more severe existential threat than SIDs due to the worsening climate catastrophe including rising sea levels.

Though SIDs account for less than one percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, they are disproportionately affected by climate change impact.

SIDS are inherently and uniquely vulnerable to exogenous shocks due to their small size, geographical remoteness, limited scale and undiversified nature of their economies, and high dependence on external markets, among others.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerability of the tourist ecosystem, especially for SIDS, where tourism accounts for nearly 35-80% of all exports.

Debt distress is another challenge that SID countries are grappling with.

The debt service burden has significantly increased diverting the valuable resources from health, education, and social security.

Excellencies,

Small Island Developing Countries have tremendous development potential that should be capitalized on.

The draft outcome document has aptly recognized the challenges SIDS are facing and has given utmost priority to the measures urgently needed to address these challenges.

The group of LDCs strongly urges for immediate support and cooperation to SIDS for addressing the multidimensional vulnerabilities facing SIDS.

To address these challenges SIDS faces and support SIDS in its development needs, stronger and enhanced global support is essential.

We must help strengthen the sustainability and resilience of SIDS and the ability to build back better from persistent shocks.

SIDS deserve stronger attention and should not be left behind.

We urge the development partners and the international community to support and facilitate SIDS with an enhanced means of implementation to combat the existential threats of climate change.

We call for making easy and smooth access to climate funds.

We also urge the MDBs and IFIs to provide enough, affordable and concessional financing to help SIDS fully leverage their development potentials including sustaining tourism, energy transition, and market access.

In this context, the SIDS4 Conference is a historic opportunity to generate renewed momentum to chart an ambitious path for the achievement of the special needs of the Small Island Developing States.

As the overarching theme of the conference “Charting the course towards resilient prosperity” resonates, the conference should spare no effort to cement a solid path to a resilient and prosperous future for SIDS further consolidating the achievement of the Samoa Pathway.

The LDCs, therefore, urge for the full support of the international community, including the UN system, for the efficient and effective implementation of priorities that the countries have identified as crucial and help them embark on a journey to a new decade of Programme of Action charted for the better future of SIDS.

The LDCs shall extend the fullest cooperation and remain constructively and productively engaged throughout the process.

We also have this opportunity to request for the highest level of participation in the 4th SIDS Conference being held in Antigua and Barbuda and extend every possible cooperation to SIDS.

We wish for its successful conclusion.

I thank you for your kind attention.